2/19/72

Dear Jerry,

Being snowed in at our ages is a bit less romantic than novels might lead you to believe. And are we snowed in! With the blizzard still blowing. From accounts Lil has heard much of the area is without current. We still have it. But the drifts are so great in the lane than when I went out to get the mail much more than an hour ago it tired me so much I still feel it. And the round trip is but a thousand feet. Drift are up to my crotch, or were then. The mailman got to my box, out the mail it, started up and got off into a ditch. He was kind enough to ask the neighbor close to the road whose phone he used to call for help to tell me that I did havemy mail -three hours+ late. The neighbor who usually cleans my lane with his tractor when he can-last time, 8 days!- could not get his tractor started this a.m., and he has four-five times the distance before he makes it to the road before he can do anything for me. So, I am apprehensive, and understand this in my response to your letter. And thanks for the package of folders which got here with the paper torn on most edges, bent and wet, but they are no less sueful and appreciated. There is an irony in the amount of postage! Unfortunately, they don't often get reused. I am always starting new files and rarely emptying any. I did this week, after winning the money that "#%_&'()*@ owed me. I cleaned out that file, for I'll never do business with him again.

I guess a thin skin bleeds easiest. If I am not mistaken, I did not say the only possibility was that you were ~~xxx~~ making slighting reference to our poverty. I explained to you, or at least intended, that this is the kind of interpretation that was possible, that feared Lil would take it that way, and that I do not like to think can this be? I don't think you would thinkingly do anything brutal, but I do know your love of what you consider jokes. I have not always considered all of them funny. But, we know you are sensitive about this. When are you going to start asking yourself what others can have such an alergy to? When are you going to think of t e feelings of others as you do your own? You did not include any letters, note of scrap of paper with the carbon. And it followed my having to send you a poorer carbon that I would have liked. It was not something in which you ar working. Its purpose was to open your mind a bit, to illustrate that when polite letters fail, impolite ones, whether or not they succeed, are the alternative, and in this case, prima facie, one succeeded. Howard will tell you that I sometimes counsel the other extreme and that he has just done such a one for me and he succeeded very well. But your mind is closed on too many things, and at your age, with this the case, I can only wonder what you will let it do when you are twice 25.

If I haven't more than once apologized to you for the poor carbons, you are the only one with whom I have corresponded of whom this is true. But there may be another are in which I haven t caressed your thin skin. Sometimes I send a poor carbon by accident, when it is not clear from the contents that I have had to make too many carbons. Absent-mindedly, I just fail to notice that a sheet is past use or, I put it back instead of throwing it away. I keep a bag by the side of my desk for disposing of it when I notice it, right underneath where I keep the carbon paper.

If you had sent me what you say, a box, I would have been more inclined to rule out all possibilities but simple generosity. But you did not. You sent a single packet, a small faction of a box. This is not to say I do not welcome it, for I do. It means that until it is worn the copies of my more important letters will be blacker. The new stuff I have is good in every way except blackness. For some reason it is pale when new.

Now maybe my recollection, as it does now more frequently, is going back on me, but I repeat I think I said there was more than this alternative, but that if this was the kind if joke you intended, well——

On the Esquire piece your recollection is conveniently selective, so I remind you. My first knowledge that you had it was when you told me that Sylvia had sent it to you.

I then asked only part of what was in my mind: why did she send it to you? You said so that your could copy and distribute. Fine when you can do this. But the rest of the question in my mind was when I am the only one working on that case. I don't see how anyone who knows no more about that case than is in my book could not at least suppose that the article might have some significance, as indeed it does. It took much work on my part and that, I fear, too late. Now if the first time we talked about this I told you not to rush because someone was sending it to me, I apologize. I thought and think that was a second conversation. He got sick and he hasn't been able to do it yet. My first reading was from Ed's copy. I believe that as soon as I got his I sent you a note saying there was no rush, but that I would appreciate two copies, one to keep not marked up and one for a friend you do not know who doesn't have time for magazines and whose mature judgement I seek and prize. But in any evernt, as you say, there was no reason to "drop everything". Yet when you send the packet of carbon and do not send that, and with no note in the carbon, why not play a game a switch roles for a while and ask yourself if my reaction is 100% as unreasonable as you seem to say. If my recollection of our conversation is wrong, I do owe you an apology on this.

School, as I understand well, can be hectic when one holds down a full-time job.

I'm responding to your paragraphs in their sequence. I do appreciate your sending me things because I need them. Very few people do and almost nobody thinks of it, which makes me appreciate more the few who do, whatever they do. But you again are looking at this one way only, and the questions is not my resentment (I think the letter was pretty cool) or whether it was intended as a bum joke, but again the context. It has been at least 3-4 months since you said you'd let me have some folders. Fine. You have been here at least one time since then, maybe twice. And you didn't bring any. We all can and do forget. You also didn't send any, and they could have come parcel post at leass than the cosst of the folders. But you do not do that. When I have never said that I need carbon, you send a minuscule supply of that. Is it possible that with this series of facts someone could have interpreted as I did say it could be interpreted?

On the Times thing, I think I said I had said all I want to. There are reason for it. Dome I resented very much and think was precisely what I called it. For the rest, there is little of any consequence that I recall that we had not, at one point or another, discussed. You ignored all that time we spent onit. For me that means I wasted the time. From the very first time you mentioned thinking of doing a piece, when it was an entirely different thing than emerged, one that not only bears little relationship to the first concept but, in fact, at the least backtracks from it no end, if not more, I have told you and told you and told you that you can criticize a newspaper only in terms of the reality of newspapering. This began when you had no more than MORW in mind, and mostof all with MORE is this not only true but vital. Water stays on a duck's back better. When we talked about this after I emailed my criticisms and comments and before you received them, and I took a specific case that we had discussed at length before, with no reflection of it in the overlong piece, you finally came around to what I had warned you from the first and now you say you will have to change or eliminate that. And not for any reason I hadn't already given you before you wrote. Now even if you do not have to shorten the piece, and even if you are not concerned about wasting your time, do you not realize that in the same space because of this inclusion you had to treat another or other things less fully? So, when your mind is locked tighly against anything but your preconcepetion, with all I can't get to, tell me why I should want to take time on this? I haven't even finished reading the Pentagon Papers yet, and I regard that as important. In several weeks, I haven't finished another important work, Khruschev Remembers, and this with all the time I spend waiting for Li. This time of the year I take her to work, which breaks up the early part of the day, get her at night, which breaks it up even more (last night I waited an hour and a half!), and not until this morning, and then by laying other overdue things aside, did I begin to writing the Epilogue to PM (which you haven't read in what, two years?). Now I haven't read several things of Howard's, one something for which I was largely responsible. Yet as soon as I could I did read your piece. And if I don't say what you like, you get pissed off. What good do I do you if I tell you only what you want to hear? I know one person who I am sure did not tell you what that person told me about the piece (not HR, by the way). You would not have liked it, so you didn't hear it. I say nothing or I say what I do think. If perfection is not a state or man and I am a man, I'll stand on my record, and I have had to face the most picayune criticisms, as you have not. I think instead of taking time to justify to me, and I'll not respond to anything like that, you would do better to ask yourself in several instances if there is a

basis for the criticism or opinionother than I made explicit. You should in some case be able to get answers I will not give you, or at least questions you should resolve.

One of the things I am certain you do not agree with I will also not argue further. That is the Belin matter. Here, collaterally, you can get an independent evaluation of my judgement. I had correspondence with HR about it before anything appeared in print, and I have no objections to his telling you anything I said or giving you any representation that is his of how clearly I saw ahead.

You have lost your sense of values in what is basicly a good job. That faults it badly, especially to the professional. Kaiser is another of the areas. I have read West. Did you send it to me? I have written then, and I think I sent you a carbon. Too many of your representations of a scale of values are of emotional rather than logical, factual or news basis. I see and think I understand the reasons, and they include more than I gave you. But I will not add to what I gave you in these areas, for more than one reason, and one is that you are so rigid and inflexible that you will resent it without thinking and then will just refuse to think, will react emotionally.

It is the honesty of my expression of my emotion in my writing that you do not like. But I am honest with my reader and with myself. We can be dishonest with both without so intending. I think you have been.

As you can see, I have taken much more time than you did. In every way I have less, and I carry a load not nearly indicated inwhat I told you so you could better understand and not do what I do not think you intended and do not think I said you intended. Now why do you think I have taken this time, as I cannot and will not do indefinitely? To argue? I don't really care about thatkind of thing. And I got 8 letters today, of which I answer this first-and some are official? Instead of me telling you why, let me instead, whether you tell me or not, ask you to ask yourself.

I'll give you a sinble clue: You have an excellent man's mind in a man's body,but too often you use that mind like a boy, not a man. My opinion, no more. Consider it, generally or specifically.

Best,